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Bush Fills Posts In Security Names Deputies At CIA And NSC

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect George Bush made two national security appointments on Wednesday, designating the No. 2 man at the Central Intelligence Agency, Robert M. Gates, to become the deputy national security adviser. Bush said he would nominate Richard J. Kerr to replace Gates at the CIA.

Bush said in a statement issued in Washington that Gates "knows the system, the critical importance of the interagency process for presidential decision-making and the details of the management of that process."

President Ronald Reagan had nominated Gates to succeed the late William J. Casey as director of central intelligence but withdrew the nomination in March 1987 amid furor over the Iran-Contra affair.

Gates denied at the time that he or the agency had tried to cover up CIA's participation in the Iran arms deal, and he maintained a high reputation among intelligence experts in Congress.

The vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Sen. William S. Cohen, R-Maine, said Wednesday that Gates "brings a tremendous reservoir of talent" to the National Security Council staff.

CIA Director William H. Webster said the appointment of Gates "is a tribute to him and a vote of confidence for the agency. While we will miss him here, his appointment is a real plus for the national security of this country."

Gates would serve as deputy to Bush's designated national security adviser, retired Air Force Gen. Brent Scowcroft. In Reagan's administration, Lt. Col. Colin L. Powell is national security adviser, and John D. Negroponte is his deputy.

Gates' appointment is not subject to Senate confirmation; Kerr's appointment as deputy to Webster is subject to hearings by the Senate intelligence panel and a two-thirds vote of the full Senate.

Had Gates been confirmed as director of central intelligence, he would have been the first CIA analyst to have attained that post. Previous CIA directors either have served in the agency's clandestine service or have come from outside, like Webster or Bush, who was CIA chief in 1976.

Kerr has spent his career as a CIA analyst and administrator.

Kerr is "a highly qualified CIA career officer ..." said Webster. "As deputy director for intelligence, heading up the analytical side of the agency, Kerr is my principal adviser on the production of finished intelligence and is widely respected throughout the intelligence community."

Gates, 45, has served with the CIA for 22 years, including a five-year loan from 1974-79 to the National Security Council's staff.

Kerr, 53, joined the CIA as a military analyst in 1960, concentrating on biographical and reference material relating to the Soviet Union. According to a biography released by the Bush's transition office, Kerr also has worked as an imagery analyst, apparently scrutinizing satellite photographs.